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Senate of Pennsylvania

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STATE EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT SYSTEMS BOARD

July 21, 2011

Marlene Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

RE: Applications of AT&T Inc. and Deutsche Telekom AG for Consent to Assign or Transfer Control of Licenses and Authorizations; (WT Proceeding - No. 11-65).

To The Commission:

Thank you for considering my letter in support of the above application. I believe the likely outcomes of this transaction will benefit my constituents in Pennsylvania and many other citizens throughout the state and country. The potential this merger holds is sure to be overwhelmingly beneficial for the American people. We must keep an eye on the future above all; and this deal is ambitious and forward-looking, with potential to provide a multitude of benefits to millions of Americans.

In my duties as a state legislator, I have dealt with numerous issues that will be positively affected if the FCC consents to the transfer of licenses. Online features are fast becoming less about lifestyle and more about *quality of life*—better access to healthcare, education, economic opportunity, etc. Because these two companies expect to be able to provide access to more than 97 percent of the U.S. population following the merger, it will indeed have an impact on almost every individual from almost all parts of the country.

This is critical because I am most concerned about equal access to technology among all people, no matter their race, class, or geography. Broadband, especially *mobile* broadband, will level the playing field. Consider that about a quarter of all Americans use smartphones as their primary means of Internet access, including 44 percent of African Americans and Hispanics. As wireless devices continue to supplant laptops and desktops, it will be essential that mobile broadband service is widely available.

I certainly defer to the FCC's experts, but I would ask that your decision counts the concerns I have highlighted among your highest priorities. Allowing the merger to proceed could be a tipping point in history and a chance like it may not come again.

Respectfully,

Vincent J. Hughes
Senate Democratic Appropriations Chairman

CC: Chairman Julius Genachowski
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
Commissioner Michael Copps
Commissioner Robert McDowell